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Turner thinks CIA should use professors, clerics, reporters

By Brian Jones
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Stansfield Turner, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, said in Minneapolis yesterday that the CIA should be able to use professors, clerics and news reporters as undercover agents.

Turner said "I think it is cynical and disloyal" for news reporters to be unwilling to share information with U.S. intelligence agencies such as the CIA.

Turner met here with a group of business executives and, later, with editors and reporters of the Minneapolis Tribune and The Minneapolis Star. The visit was part of what he called "an effort to be more open with the American public."

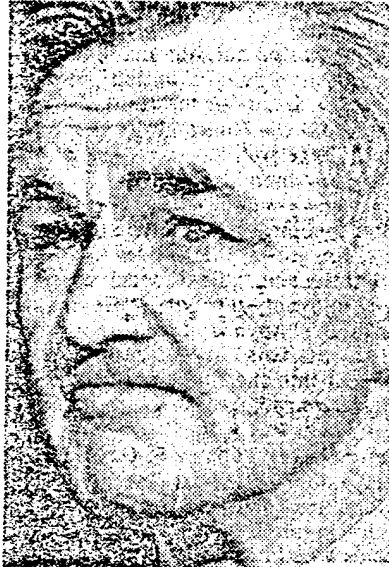
The Carter administration will "very shortly" present a proposed CIA charter to Congress that will define the limits to which the agency can go to gather undercover information, Turner said.

The agency is operating under rules imposed by President Carter. Since widespread revelations of excessive CIA operations were listed in congressional hearings five years ago, Congress has been considering creating a legal charter to more clearly define how the agency should operate.

Carter, in his State of the Union address, said "We need quick passage of a new charter to define clearly the legal authority and accountability of our intelligence agencies."

"While guaranteeing that abuses will not recur, we need to remove unwarranted restraints on our ability to collect intelligence and to tighten our controls on sensitive intelligence information," the president said.

Turner said the administration's pro-



Stansfield Turner

posed charter would provide definitions of what the CIA's authority is, a list of prohibited activities and a clearly defined oversight process to review the agency's activities.

One controversial issue has been the past use of university professors and researchers, religious figures and news reporters — or agents posing as such — to infiltrate foreign countries and report information to the CIA.

The CIA created a rule against using such agents following public outcry during congressional hearings, although Turner said he has made some exceptions to it. Turner said he personally favored using such agents, but did not say if the administration's proposed CIA charter would call for approval of the method.

Streamlining the review of secret intelligence operations is another part of the effort to bolster effectiveness of the U.S. spy force. CIA operations are reviewed by eight separate con-

gressional committees.

Under a bill pending in the Senate, only the permanent Select Committees on Intelligence in each house would continue to have oversight powers.

"In some cases, more people on Capitol Hill have known about a covert operation than in the CIA," Turner said. He criticized leaks of information from Congress which he said embarrassed the United States.

Answering criticism that the CIA had been lax in predicting world events, most notably the Iranian revolution in late 1978 and early 1979, Turner defended the agency's performance.

He said the CIA produced regular assessments of the revolutionary activities in Iran. But he admitted the CIA was surprised by the power that the revolutionaries and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini gained.

"We did not predict it would coalesce under a 79-year-old cleric to be more powerful than a shah ... we missed the call, the short-term call," Turner said.